

**SCHOOL MATTERS**

# New school year in Palo Alto brings changes

Palo Alto schools started today, and some schools are welcoming new principals.

At Ohlone Elementary School, William Overton is taking over for longtime principal Susan Charles. Overton was a teacher at Ohlone before stepping up to the principal's position.



**PREEVA TRAMIEL**

Juana Briones Elementary School is currently without a permanent principal. Michael O'Neill left the area to move his family to New England, but Gary Dalton, who was at the helm of Juana Briones in the early 2000s, has come out of retirement to get the school year started while a search continues for O'Neill's replacement.

JLS Middle School principal Don Cox has been replaced by Sharon Ofek, who was an assistant principal at JLS last year.

## District registration forms go online

The school district is eliminating an annoying parental ritual by using online registration for the first time. Emergency forms, district policies, acceptable-use policies, and other district information — which used to come to the house in a 2-inch-thick mailing — only to sit in a file all year, has gone electronic.

"The parents enter their own emergency information on the Infosnap Web site, and the program generates a hard-copy of the emergency form, which we send to the school," said Margie Mitchell, attendance accounting supervisor for the district. "We've gotten nothing but positive comments from the parents."

The district did use snail mail in May to send out a security code for each district student. Each child has a unique code in the system, but with the new system, parents get even more of a break on the paperwork — the system can fill in all identical information for siblings.

"If there are multiple children in the district, parents can repopulate the form," Mitchell said.

The district is using the Connect-Ed phone system to remind parents who have not submitted their child's information yet to do so. The district is prepared to help parents who lack computer or English skills or who need computers for online registration, Mitchell said.

"We have a bank of computers set up with someone from the ELD (English Learner's Department) who can translate," Mitchell said.

Preferably, parents should make an appointment. There are two times for parents to come in — either 10 a.m. to noon, or 4 to 6 p.m. The attendance office also has a laptop available for parents to input data.

Parents who need help registering their children online can drop by the office at 25 Churchill Ave. from 8 a.m. to 4 p.m., or make an appointment with Central Attendance by calling 650-329-3707.

*School Matters is happy to hear your feedback. Please e-mail any comments to [schoolmatters@paloaltopta.org](mailto:schoolmatters@paloaltopta.org) to reach Preeva Tramiel, who is writing the column this year. Look on the PTA Council Web site, [www.paloaltopta.org](http://www.paloaltopta.org), and pull down the leftmost menu, and click on "school matters" to see submission guidelines for press releases.*